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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 000612

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [JA](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: Report re Jaffna security zones recommends mutual GSL-LTTE drawdowns and increased monitoring

Refs: (A) Colombo-SA/INS 04/08/03 class e-mail

- (B) Colombo 593, and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador E. Ashley Wills.

Reasons: 1.5 (b, d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Minister Moragoda (pls protect) has provided us a copy of a long-awaited re the security zones in Jaffna. The report, which was written by a retired Indian general, recommends that the GSL and Tigers agree to mutual drawdowns of their military positions. In doing this, both sides would engage in confidence-building measures facilitated by increased monitoring. While the report is fair-minded, the Tigers -- who seem to want to keep this issue alive for political reasons -- will probably balk at its recommendations. (Note: Also see DATT's Septel review of the report.) END SUMMARY.

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Nambiar Report  
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2. (C) On April 7, Milinda Moragoda (Amcit -- pls protect), the Minister of Economic Reform and a key player on peace process issues, provided the Ambassador a (close-hold) copy of a long-awaited independent report on the "high security zones" in Jaffna District. Retired Indian General Satish Nambiar wrote the short, complex report, which was sent to Department in Ref A. Nambiar, who had been asked by the GSL to draw up the report, had visited Sri Lanka earlier this year for consultations and research on the controversial security zones issue. (Note: Our understanding is that the Indian government, while publicly taking a hands-off posture regarding the report, paid Nambiar's salary and expenses.) According to Moragoda, the GSL continues to review the report. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have not yet seen it, but are scheduled to receive a copy soon. Nambiar is due to visit Sri Lanka in late April to discuss the report with the government and the LTTE.

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Recommending Mutual Drawdowns  
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3. (C) The report acknowledges the importance of assisting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in returning to their home areas in Jaffna, including to sites within the security zones. To facilitate this, the report's central conclusion is that the government and the LTTE should engage in carefully calibrated and mutual military drawdowns of their Jaffna-related military positions. (Note: The military's security zones constitute approximately 18 percent of the land size of Jaffna. The LTTE only has military posts in a sliver of Jaffna, but it has many cadre in Jaffna and a strong military presence just south in the Wanni area.) In making this recommendation, the report, in effect, rejects the LTTE's long-standing view that the government should unilaterally slash the size of its security zones, so that the IDPs can return home immediately. (Note: Per Ref B, about 270,000 IDPs have already returned to their homes in the north/east. Over 500,000 IDPs remain in the south.) In light of the LTTE's strong stand on this issue, the report admits that agreement to the notion of mutual drawdowns will have to be achieved by the two sides within the context of the ongoing GSL-LTTE peace talks.

4. (C) If the LTTE agrees to (unspecified) drawdowns of its own forces and at least some of the confidence-building measures set out below, the report recommends that the Sri Lankan military move forward and consider drawdowns of its own positions in the following two stages:  
-- (A) The military would dismantle its "forward positions" in areas near "Muhamalai, Nagarkovil, and the promontories south of Chavakachcheri, along the beach road south of Jaffna and along the coastal areas."

(Note: The three areas named above are all in eastern Jaffna and close to the GSL-LTTE Northern Forward Defense Line, "FDL," on the Jaffna Isthmus.)

-- (B) The security zones surrounding Palaly airbase, Kankasanturai ("KKS") harbor, and Point Pedro harbor would be "considered for reduction in size..."  
(Note: The area around Palaly airbase and KKS harbor forms the largest of the security zones in Jaffna. It is where the government's Security Force Headquarters in Jaffna is located.)

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Increased Monitoring  
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15. (C) In moving toward military drawdowns, the report recommends that both sides engage in confidence-building measures facilitated by increased international monitoring. The report is not dispositive on what organization would do such monitoring. It recommends, however, that the Norwegian-run Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) assume the responsibility, as it is already in place monitoring the February 2002 ceasefire agreement. In order to do this, Nambiar states that the SLMM should expand the size of its staff and be provided more resources. If the SLMM was to assume more responsibility, consideration should be given to it reporting to a "joint commission" that could include "representatives from the major countries that agree to provide the additional observers/monitors, and from some of the major aid donors."

16. (C) The report outlines the following two major areas for the increased monitoring effort to focus on:

-- (1) Long-range weaponry: The report recommends that the two sides agree to place their long-range weaponry in "designated areas under international monitoring." If the LTTE objects to this, the group would be asked to allow the monitors to inspect the equipment where it is in place.

-- (2) Challenge Inspections: At the request of one of the sides, the monitors would inspect a site or sites controlled by the other side in order to ensure that all was in conformity with the ceasefire agreement.

17. (C) ((Note: In recommending that monitors focus on these two areas, the report clearly is taking into account two great fears of the Sri Lankan military in Jaffna: First, that the LTTE, in a sudden strike, would use its long-range guns positioned in the Wannai to devastate Palaly airbase. Second, that without inspections, the military could miss a surge in LTTE troop concentrations potentially signaling the launch of a surprise attack.)))

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Re Key Road Artery  
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18. (C) In addition to the items reviewed above, the monitors would also be responsible for facilitating a confidence-building measure involving the use of the "A-9" road. (Note: This important road connecting Jaffna with the south reopened a year ago. Due to the war, it had been closed for over a decade.) Nambiar advocates that the Sri Lankan military be allowed to use the road, something that it is currently unable to do because a key stretch is within LTTE-controlled territory. If the Tigers were amenable, the monitors would ensure that the military's vehicles would not be subject to stops and searches on this stretch of the road. (Note: The opening of the A-9 to such convoys is important to the military, which is now reliant exclusively on air and sea transport for resupply and troop deployments involving Jaffna.)

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COMMENT  
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19. (C) In our estimation, the report is professional and fair-minded. Nambiar clearly understands how volatile this issue is and the need to proceed via deliberate steps. Our guess is that the Sri Lankan military will like most of the report, as it takes into account many of its security concerns. (Note: The military may not be too thrilled with the idea of "challenge inspections" of its positions, however.)

10. (C) Despite Nambiar's best efforts to be fair to the LTTE, however, it is quite possible that the group will balk at what he recommends. The Tigers seem to want to keep the security zone issue alive for political reasons, as it has proven a useful tool in whipping up

support in Jaffna. It is also tough to see the Tigers, at this time, agreeing to the monitoring of their long-range weapons or allowing "challenge inspections" of sites in the Wanni. Of course, the Tigers could surprise everyone, but the group has shown no indication that it wants to compromise on this particular issue. (Note: Earlier this year, for example, the LTTE pulled out of a joint committee set up to review security-related issues, after vociferously rejecting a preliminary report prepared by the GSL military re the security zone issue.) The best that can probably be expected is that the group does not reject the report outright, but agrees to review it. END COMMENT.

11. (U) Minimize considered.

WILLS